

- SUBJECT:** Requiring 15 field experience hours before educator certification
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 6 ayes — Eissler, Hochberg, Allen, Huberty, Strama, Weber
1 nay — Shelton
4 absent — Aycock, Dutton, Guillen, T. Smith
- WITNESSES:** For — Ted Melina Raab, Texas American Federation of Teachers; Marisa Wolf, Texas Teaching Fellows; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Portia Bosse, Texas State Teachers Association; Monty Exter, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Ken McCraw, Texas Association of Community Schools; Paige Williams, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Ken Zornes, Texas Business and Education Coalition)

Against — Vernon Reaser, A+ Texas Teachers; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Melva Cardenas, Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators)
- DIGEST:** CSHB 135 would require that before a school district could employ a candidate for certification as a teacher of record, the candidate would have to complete at least 15 hours of field experience in which the candidate was physically present in a classroom helping with instruction by preparing lesson plans and delivering instruction to students under the supervision of a teacher of record at a public or private school recognized by the Texas Education Agency.

A teacher of record would mean a person employed by a school district who taught the majority of the instructional day and was responsible for evaluating student achievement and assigning grades.

The 15-hour field experience requirement would not affect the period within which an individual had to complete field experience hours as determined by the State Board of Educator Certification if the individual was not accepted into an educator preparation program before the prescribed deadline and was hired for a teaching assignment after the prescribed deadline.

The commissioner of education would adopt procedures and standards for recognizing a private school as one where a candidate for certification could earn field hours. The board would propose rules relating to the field experience requirement in the bill on or before January 1, 2012.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2011.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 135 would set a higher bar for alternatively certified teachers and would help to ensure that all teachers had first-hand teaching experience before being hired in a public school.

Alternatively certified teachers currently enter the classroom at a disadvantage, having had no hands-on experience. These teachers tend to teach in high-poverty districts with the lowest state assessment scores, so it is important that they be well prepared to enter the classroom.

Alternatively certified teachers must complete 30 lab hours prior to certification, 15 hours of which must be classroom observation hours. The bill would change observation hours to teaching hours.

The bill's implementation would not harm student learning. Student teachers coexist in classrooms for an entire semester without harm to student learning, so it is not likely that a student teacher present for 15 hours would have a significant impact.

The bill would not interfere with school districts' local control and would not change their autonomy in choosing whom to hire. A school can determine whether or not to have student teachers assigned to their school.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

CSHB 135 would diminish school districts' local control. There is always a learning curve with new employees, and there is no need for the state to mandate how to overcome it. School districts know what is best for their students.

The bill could harm student learning because classroom observers are a distraction for students, and abruptly switching educators from their usual teacher to a teacher in training would impede learning.